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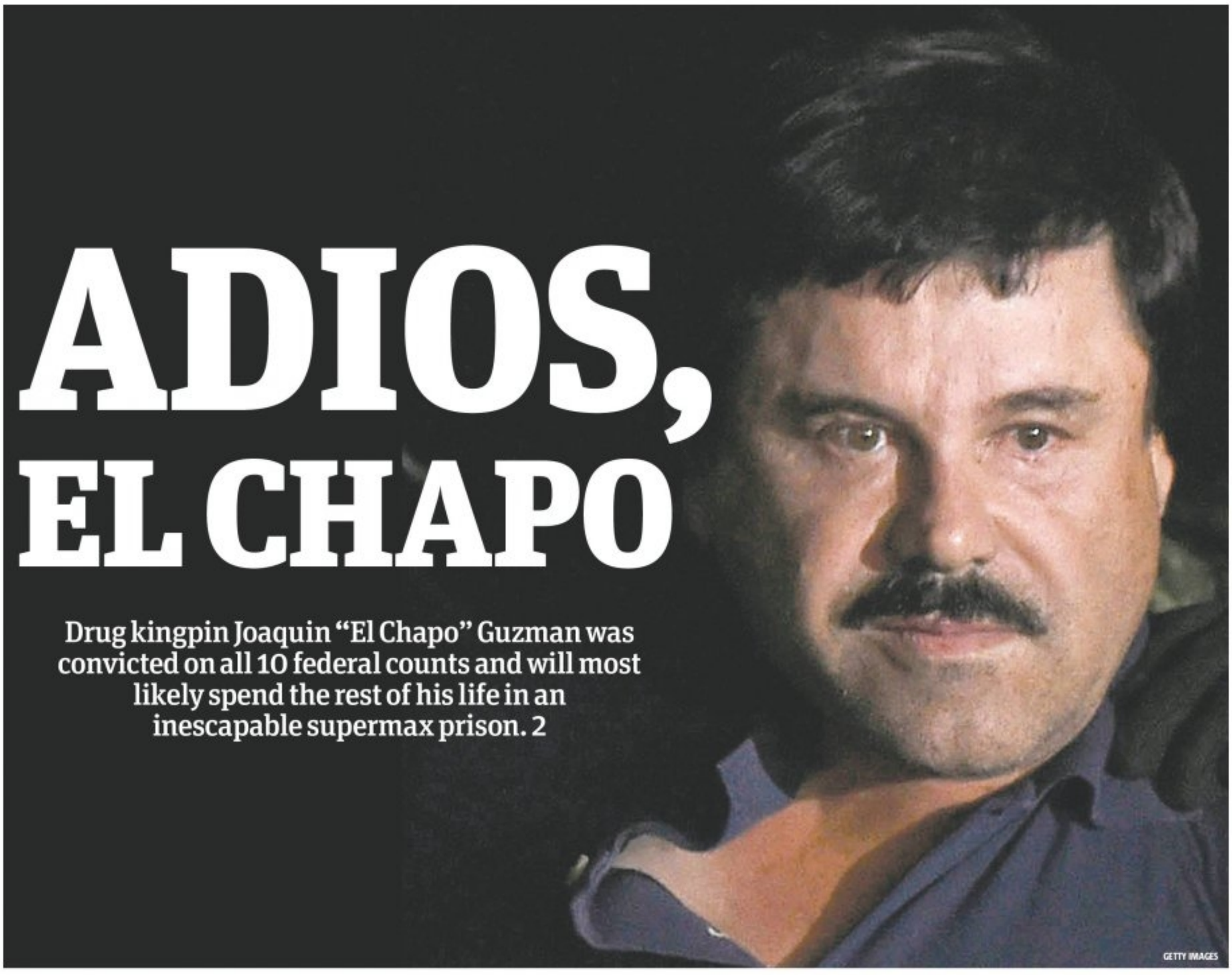
ADIOS, EL CHAPO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Drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was convicted on all 10 federal counts and will most likely spend the rest of his life in an inescapable supermax prison. 2

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‘EL CHAPO’ CONVICTED, FACES LIFE IN PRISON

Jurors in federal court in Brooklyn found Joaquin Guzman, 61, guilty on all 10 U.S. charges.

Emma Coronel Aispuro, wife of Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, is surrounded by security and members of the press as she exits the U.S. District Court. GETTY IMAGES

The world’s most infamous cartel boss, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, who rose from poverty in rural Mexico to amass billions of dollars, was found guilty in a U.S. court on Tuesday of smuggling tons of drugs to the United States over a violent, colorful, decades-long career.

Jurors in federal court in Brooklyn convicted Guzman, 61, head of the Sinaloa cartel, on all 10 counts brought by U.S. prosecutors.

Richard Donoghue, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, said he expected Guzman to receive life without parole when sentenced on June 25. “It is a sentence from which there is no escape and no return,” Donoghue told reporters.

Guzman, one of the major figures in Mexican drug wars that have roiled the country since 2006, become almost legendary for escaping from Mexican high-security jails twice and avoiding massive manhunts. He cultivated a Robin Hood image among the poor in his home state of Sinaloa.

Guzman sat and showed no emotion while the verdict was read. Once the jury left the room, he and his wife Emma Coronel put their hands to their hearts and gave each other the thumbs-up sign. His wife shed tears.

Guzman, whose nickname means “Shorty,” was extradited to the United States for trial in 2017 after he was arrested in Mexico the year before.

Though other high-ranking cartel figures had been extradited previously, Guzman was the first to go to trial instead of pleading guilty.

The 11-week trial, with testimony from more than 50 witnesses, offered an unprecedented look at the inner workings of the Sinaloa cartel, named for the state in northwestern Mexico where Guzman was born in a poor mountain village.

The U.S. government said Guzman trafficked tons of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine into the United States over more than two decades, consolidating his power in Mexico through murders and wars with rival cartels.

Small in stature, Guzman’s smuggling exploits, the violence he used and the sheer size of his illicit business made Guzman the world’s most notorious drug baron since Colombia’s Pablo Escobar, who was shot dead by police in 1993.

Guzman’s lawyers say he was set up as a “fall guy” by Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada, a powerful drug lord from Sinaloa who remains at large.

Jeffrey Lichtman, a lawyer for Guzman, told reporters after the verdict that the defense faced an uphill fight, given the amount of evidence the government presented, and the widespread perception that Guzman was already guilty.

“This was a case that was literally an avalanche, avalanche of evidence,” Lichtman said. “Of course we’re going to appeal.”

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was elected last year after promising a change to the deadly military-led war against drug gangs, suggesting a negotiated peace and amnesty for nonviolent drug dealers, traffickers and farmers. The most detailed evidence against Guzman came from more than a dozen former associates who struck deals to cooperate with U.S. prosecutors. REUTERS

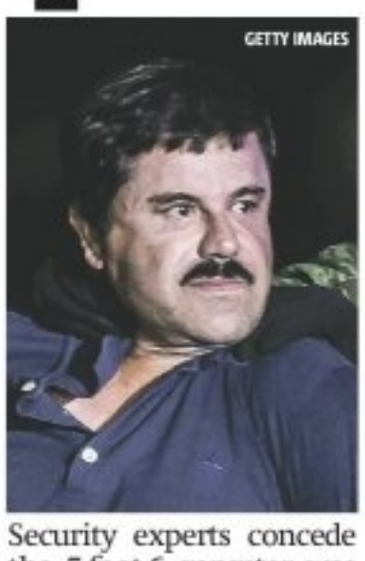
El Chapo’s rise and fall

Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, Mexico’s most notorious kingpin, shipped tons of drugs around the world, escaped two maximum-security prisons and became one of the world’s most-wanted fugitives.

The 61-year-old now faces the prospect of life in prison.

Jurors on Tuesday found Guzman guilty of all 10 counts, including running a criminal enterprise, in a trial that began in November in New York.

The audacious exploits of El Chapo, or “Shorty,” captured the world’s imagination and turned him into a folk hero for some in Mexico, despite the thousands of people killed by his brutal Sinaloa cartel.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ELUSIVE KINGPIN

Security experts concede the 5-foot-6 gangster was exceptional at what he did, managing to outmaneuver, outfight or outbribe his rivals to stay at the top of the drug trade for over a decade.

Rising through the ranks of the drug world, Guzman carefully observed his mentors’ tactics and mistakes, forging alliances that kept him one step ahead of the law for years.

Mexican soldiers and U.S. agents came close to Guzman on several occasions, but his layers of bodyguards and spies always tipped him off before they stormed his safe houses.

In preparing for a raid in 2014, U.S. officers restricted information to a small group for fear of corruption among Mexican law enforcement, Drug Enforcement Administration agent Victor Vasquez testified in Guzman’s trial.

SINALOA ROOTS

Guzman was born in La Tuna, a village in the Sierra Madre mountains in Sinaloa state where smugglers have been growing opium and marijuana since the early 20th century.

He ascended in the 1980s, working with Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, alias “The Boss of Bosses,” who pioneered cocaine smuggling routes into the United States.

The aspiring capo came to prominence in 1993 when assassins who shot dead Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas claimed they had actually been aiming at Guzman.

Two weeks later, police arrested him in Guatemala and extradited him to Mexico. During his eight-year prison stay, Guzman smuggled in lovers, prostitutes and Viagra, according to accounts published in the Mexican media.

After escaping, Guzman expanded his turf by sending in assassin squads with names such as “The Ghosts” and “The Zeta Killers,” in reference to the rival Zetas gang.

Guzman hid near his childhood home, agents said, but rumors abounded of him visiting expensive restaurants and paying for all the diners. REUTERS

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Donald Trump doesn't expect shutdown despite disliking deal

With a Friday deadline, it was far from clear if the Republican president would embrace the agreement.

President Donald Trump expressed displeasure on Tuesday with a deal by congressional negotiators on border security spending that offered no funds for his promised U.S.-Mexico border wall, but did not reject it outright and indicated he did not expect another government shutdown.

Trump, who triggered a 35-day closure of about a quarter of the federal government with a December demand for $5.7 billion from Congress to help build the wall, said he had yet to decide whether to support the agreement reached on Monday night by key Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

Funding for the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department and a host of other agencies is due to expire on Friday under the stopgap spending measure passed last month by Congress to end the longest federal shutdown in U.S. history.

"I have to study it. I'm not happy about it," Trump told reporters at the White House about the tentative funding deal, which would need to be passed by the Democratic-led House and Republican-controlled Senate and signed by him.

The tentative deal included border security provisions and money for the affected parts of the government funded through Sept. 30, the end of the federal fiscal year.

The Republican president sent mixed messages about another shutdown.

"I don't think you're going to see a shutdown," Trump said, but he added: "If you did have it, it's the Democrats' fault."

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Congressional Republicans have shown little appetite for another shutdown after taking heavy criticism over the prior one. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's comments on the Senate floor touting the agreement reached on Monday night left little doubt that the top Republican in Congress wants Trump to support it.

Top Senate Dem Chuck Schumer was more direct, saying, "I strongly urge the president to sign this."

Congressional sources said the agreement includes $1.37 billion for new fencing along 55 miles of the southern border but only with currently-used designs such as "steel bollard" fencing. It also addresses capacity at immigration detention facilities, specifically the number of beds for people awaiting possible deportation.

Trump has threatened to declare a "national emergency" if Congress doesn't provide money specifically for the wall, an action he might take to redirect other funds already provided by Congress to pay for wall construction instead. Republicans have told Trump such a step would almost certainly face a legal challenge.

On Tuesday, Trump made comments that seemed to fit with the idea of declaring an emergency.

"The bottom is on the wall: We're building the wall," Trump said, adding, "we're supplementing things, and moving things around, and we're doing things that are fantastic and taking, really, from far less important areas."

Trump in 2016 said Mexico would pay for the wall, but Mexican officials repeatedly rejected that. Democrats have called the project expensive, ineffective and immoral. REUTERS

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Philly parents criticize welfare system at emotional City Council hearing

Philadelphia removes children from homes at a higher rate than other metropolitan areas, experts say.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

A packed, emotional hearing was held in Philadelphia City Council on Tuesday inquiring into the Philadelphia Department of Human Services' (DHS) practices around child custody and welfare, at which parents whose children had been removed from their homes had the chance to unleash their complaints on the leaders of the city agencies responsible.

Some accused DHS of "kidnapping." Many complained about being left voiceless in the Family Court system. "Taking kids out of their homes should be a last resort," a sign held by one attendee read.

One mother claimed children had been removed from her home days after a social worker flagged her for not having a child seat in her car and not having age-appropriate foods. The mother said she was waiting for a baby-food delivery at the time — and that her baby seat was temporarily inside her house to be cleaned.

One father testifying was Clinton Lewis, who previously spoke to Metro in 2014 about the struggle to regain custody of his two sons. After he contacted DHS asking for help with one sick son, both boys were removed in 2009 over "inadequate housing," he said, due to temporary damages to his home. His children are now back at home after three more years of fighting in the courts — gone a total of "seven years, five months," Lewis said.

The hearing was convened at the request of City Councilman David Oh, who was prompted to examine the issue after having had a run-in with the DHS himself not long ago. Oh accidentally broke his 8-year-old son's collarbone while teaching him judo — and subsequently got referred to DHS and investigated for child welfare violations. Though Oh was cleared, the process left him with concern about how families are being treated. He convened the hearing to investigate DHS processes and examine whether they can be reformed.

UPenn professor Kara R. Finck testified at the hearing that children in Philadelphia are removed from their families at a rate higher than any other large metropolitan area — reportedly three times that of New York City and four times that of Chicago.

"The high rates of child removal indicate that Philadelphia resorts to removal far more frequently than necessary to attempt to resolve the struggles facing parents and their children," Finck testified. "Placement in foster care, even for a brief amount of time, is not a benign or neutral event in a child's life. It upends their daily existence. ... Removal causes lifelong trauma to children and can often have lasting negative consequences."

Finck stressed rehabilitative social programs that can address the reasons for a child's home being deemed unsafe, or preventive legal services advocating on behalf of the family in child welfare hearings, as possible ways to reduce trauma within the system.

"Our mandate is child safety."
Cynthia Figueroa, DHS commissioner

But DHS officials defended themselves against criticism of lacking clear objective standards for reporting abuse.

"Our mandate is child safety," testified DHS Commissioner Cynthia Figueroa testified. "Removal of children from their parents' care happens only by court order and is restricted to situations of 'emergency removal because of imminent risk' and 'clear necessity' under the Juvenile Act and well-established case law."

Clinton Lewis, who testified at Tuesday's hearing on child welfare proceedings in Philadelphia. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

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Verizon did not follow through on promised incentives to customers, according to the attorney general's lawsuit. GETTY IMAGES

AG sues Verizon for breaking Amazon accessories promises

State Attorney General Josh Shapiro launched a lawsuit against telecommunications giant Verizon for not following through on providing incentives to customers who earned them.

The lawsuit alleges that Verizon customers were promised free Amazon Echo devices and free subscriptions to Amazon Prime if they signed new contracts or renewed existing ones between November and January 2018.

"If a company chooses to promise incentives to consumers signing up for their services, it is their legal responsibility to deliver on those promises."

Josh Shapiro, State attorney general

"If a company chooses to promise incentives to consumers signing up for their services, it is their legal responsibility to deliver on those promises," Shapiro said. "My Bureau of Consumer Protection will stand up and fight for Pennsylvanians and make sure they get an honest deal. Consumers should not have to be put on hold or bounced around multiple company personnel in order to get answers, and if Verizon knew of an issue in fulfilling their promises to consumers, they should have corrected those problems quickly or stopped offering the program until it was fixed."

A key discovery that served as the catalyst in filing suit against Verizon came Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection discovered Verizon had an issue with a hyperlink that would allow customers to redeem their incentives for months on end. As a result, many Verizon customers never received their free Echo devices or subscriptions to Amazon Prime.

Verizon continued to offer the incentives and signed customers up for additional two-year contacts even after it was clear that they were having difficulties getting customers their earned items, the Office of the Attorney General found.

Shapiro's lawsuit claims that the telecommunications giant negative behavior against consumers violated the Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law. The Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law was put into motion in 1968 and helps protect consumers from companies that advertise goods and services they do not have the intention of providing.

MICHAEL BUTLER

An Echo was one of the products promised to customers. GETTY IMAGES

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Bellator's 'Battle of Brits' set for Conn.

Paul Daley vs. Michael "Venom" Page will headline Saturday's Bellator 216 card.

JEFF TOMKO
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Michael "Venom" Page. COURTESY OF BELLATOR

Saturday's Bellator 216 main event between British welterweights Michael "Venom" Page and Paul Daley is billed as the biggest matchup in U.K. MMA history. So, naturally, Uncasville, Connecticut, would host this British invasion as part of Bellator's Welterweight Grand Prix.

If not for sheer logistical convenience — not to mention family, friends and a nation of British MMA fans who've been waiting to see these bitter rivals finally face off in the cage — London would've made the logical choice for both fighters.

But just like East Coasters forced to make adjustments during Tuesday's icy winter conditions, Page and Daley had to adapt to landing nearly 4,500 miles across the Atlantic and are now fully geared to what's been the called the tournament's most anticipated matchup.

"It was a little frustrating at the beginning," Page said Tuesday in Lower Manhattan, where he, along with Daley, were in town promoting Saturday's Bellator 216 event. "It was a fight made in the U.K., between two U.K. fighters — everything about it said it needed to be in the U.K. Then they moved it to Connecticut. But you get over it. I've fought in the U.S. quite often, but this should've been in the U.K."

Bellator 216, which will be live-streamed exclusively on DAZN, will also feature heavyweights Cheick Kongo vs. Vitaly Minakov along with MMA legend Mirko "Cro Cop" Filipovic making his Bellator debut against Roy Nelson.

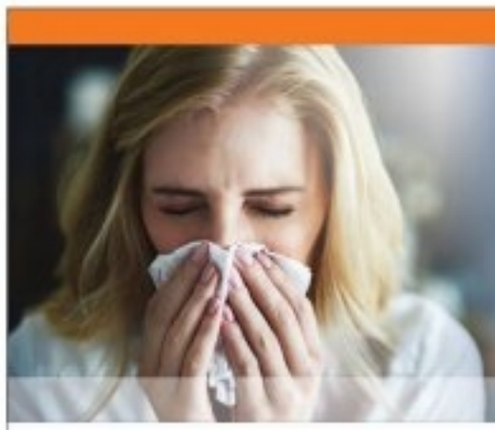
Daley (40-16-12), a veteran of nearly 60 pro MMA fights, agreed with his opponent that having the U.K. host the fight would've made the most sense, but that Bellator did what they could and now it's time to fight. "To fans and family [in the U.K.] it was disappointing," he said. "But I'm comfortable fighting in America. I've fought here plenty of times. I now have a routine; I know how to get to fight day comfortably and feel energized and excited."

Both have finished the heavy training sessions, with the only obstacle left being Friday's 170-pound weight limit. Neither see it as any distraction, especially Daley, who says his routine has been constructed from nearly a decade of U.S. fight experience. "My first time [fighting] in the U.S., I thought orange chicken from Panda Express was healthy," he said. "Now, fruit and a protein bar will do. Nothing exciting or minimalistic, I'm just enjoying the experience."

Daley disagreed about any rivalry between the two, considering Page recently told ESPN he considered Daley a "disgusting person." "In my mind, this is a fabricated rivalry to hide my opponent's insecurities, he said. "To me, it's another fight. To Michael Page, it's a rivalry. I'm just here to knock him out."

Page (13-0) is perhaps best known for his devastating knee kick that fractured the skull of Evangelista "Cyborg" Santos in 2016. In his last bout at Bellator 200, Page forced David Rickels to quit midway through the second round. "It was frustrating at first," Page said of his opponent. "In the moment, having someone pull away was frustrating. Afterward, thinking that that was a tough man I put away, like, that says a lot. I kind of enjoyed it."

But there's only one way Page wants to see Saturday's bout end. "I want to put someone to sleep. Someone who I'm not close with."



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the GRUMBLE

Pat King
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ISTOCK

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— **Anonymous**, *Metro US reader*

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A HUMBLING SPICY FOOD EXPERIENCE

I recently went to eat at a highly recommended restaurant, having heard it was some of the most authentic Thai food around. The waiters were really nice and warned me and my friends that the food was really spicy. Thinking we could handle it, we all laughed. We should not have laughed. We all shared a few dishes and were all sweating profusely and could barely keep it together. We were definitely humbled by spice that night.

— **Ed**, *Metro New York reader*

ISTOCK

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Pay more attention to your personal finances and ideas that could bring in more cash.

Taurus You'll crave knowledge, change and novelty. The experience you pick up will help map out how you plan to move forward.

Gemini An emotional matter will affect your productivity if you can't focus. Don't fall short at work.

Cancer Put everything you've got into your relationships. How you treat others will determine your future.

Leo Be the one to initiate change. If you wait for someone else to make a move, you may not like the outcome.

Virgo Get in the game. Don't let anyone throw you off guard by trash talking or shortchanging you. Believe in your ability to win.

Libra If something is getting you down, do something about it. Unfair treatment will lower your self-esteem.

Scorpio Make travel plans or lifestyle changes. You'll feel rejuvenated if you try something new. Romance is in the stars.

Sagittarius Change begins with you. Set a high standard and make arrangements to start a strict routine that will leave you feeling healthy.

Capricorn Let others do as they please, but don't feel obligated to take part. If you focus on activities you enjoy, you will connect with inspirational people.

Aquarius Listen carefully and do your own fact-checking. Someone will exaggerate a situation that could end up costing you.

Pisces Don't let an emotional incident spin out of control. Walk away if it will stop you from saying or doing something you may regret. EUGENIA LAST

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LIFESTYLE

Bob Mould
ALICIA J. ROSE

Bob Mould on making room for a little bit of sunshine

The legendary alt-rock pioneer talks his new album "Sunshine Rock" and why there's always time for a fresh start.

PAT KING
patrick.king@metro.us

Bob Mould is tired of being angry. At least for now.

For a career that spans over 40 years with such seminal and influential bands as Husker Dü, Sugar and his own solo output, the trailblazing singer-songwriter has laid the groundwork with bands like R.E.M. and The Replacements for what modern guitar rock can be. But while some of his earlier music was characterized by his scorched earth and highly personal subject matter, his brand-new album "Sunshine Rock," out on Feb. 8, finds Mould looking to lighten the mood just a little bit. But that deserves some context, of course. The new album comes off the heels of a trio of deeply reflective releases: 2012's "Silver Age"; 2014's "Beauty and Run," which came after the death of his father; and 2017's "Patch the Sky," which was written after the death of his mother. Since then, Mould had needed a fresh start both musically and in his personal life. He found a new home in Berlin and began shedding some of the distress that

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made his most recent albums so visceral for some of the brightest and most immediate material he has released in years. Metro caught up with Mould to talk about "Sunshine Rock" and the rest of his incredible career.

The new record "Sunshine Rock" comes off a run of some really excellent records. Do you view your new record as a continuation of those records or do you see it as a fresh start?
It was definitely time for a fresh start. I think, you know, losing my dad, writing "Beauty and Ruin"; losing my mom, writing "Patch the Sky." This time around, it was like, I'm hoping for a break here. You know I've had writing at the end of 2016 going into 2017 and then all of a sudden the song "Sunshine Rock" appeared. It became the tentpole for the record. It became the "a-ha" moment. Write to the light, don't write to the dark. You know my work well enough that it takes some effort to make that decision. It's not a natural one for me. So yeah, it was definitely a very conscious decision. Once the brightness appeared, I was like "OK. Let's go with this."

The record has the same blistering guitars usually associated with your work but also introduces some lush orchestral string arrangements. Were you conscious of trying to stretch the arrangements?
Making the decision to do strings, or following through and getting everything out, getting the folks in Prague to work on this, that was a late entry into the process. As I'm writing and demo'ing songs, they're fairly elaborate. A lot of times, I'll use keyboards as placeholders for melodies and a couple weeks before we started making this record I sort of woke up one morning and realized I must have more melody! I'm going to destroy things. I'm going to spend five days orchestrating six songs. I always write with melody in mind.

During your career, you have been championed by record labels that were inspired by the work you had done with Husker Dü — first with Creation Records signing Sugar, and now with Merge Records putting out your solo releases. Does it feel good to know that your influence is being felt?
I didn't see it coming and I'm grateful for it. I think if we go back to the autobiography in 2011 ("See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody"), and the Disney Hall tribute show of 2011 that became the concert documentary, I think that's where the stage might have been set for that. I think it created awareness for people who weren't familiar with the work and they came to it by association. I think, specifically with Merge, originally they were just interested in the Sugar reissues, and I mentioned to them that I might have a new album and I played them some stuff. It was sort of funny because they came originally for nostalgia but ended up with a future. So it was crazy how that happened, right [laughs]?

Make sure to catch Bob Mould and his band this Friday at Union Transfer.

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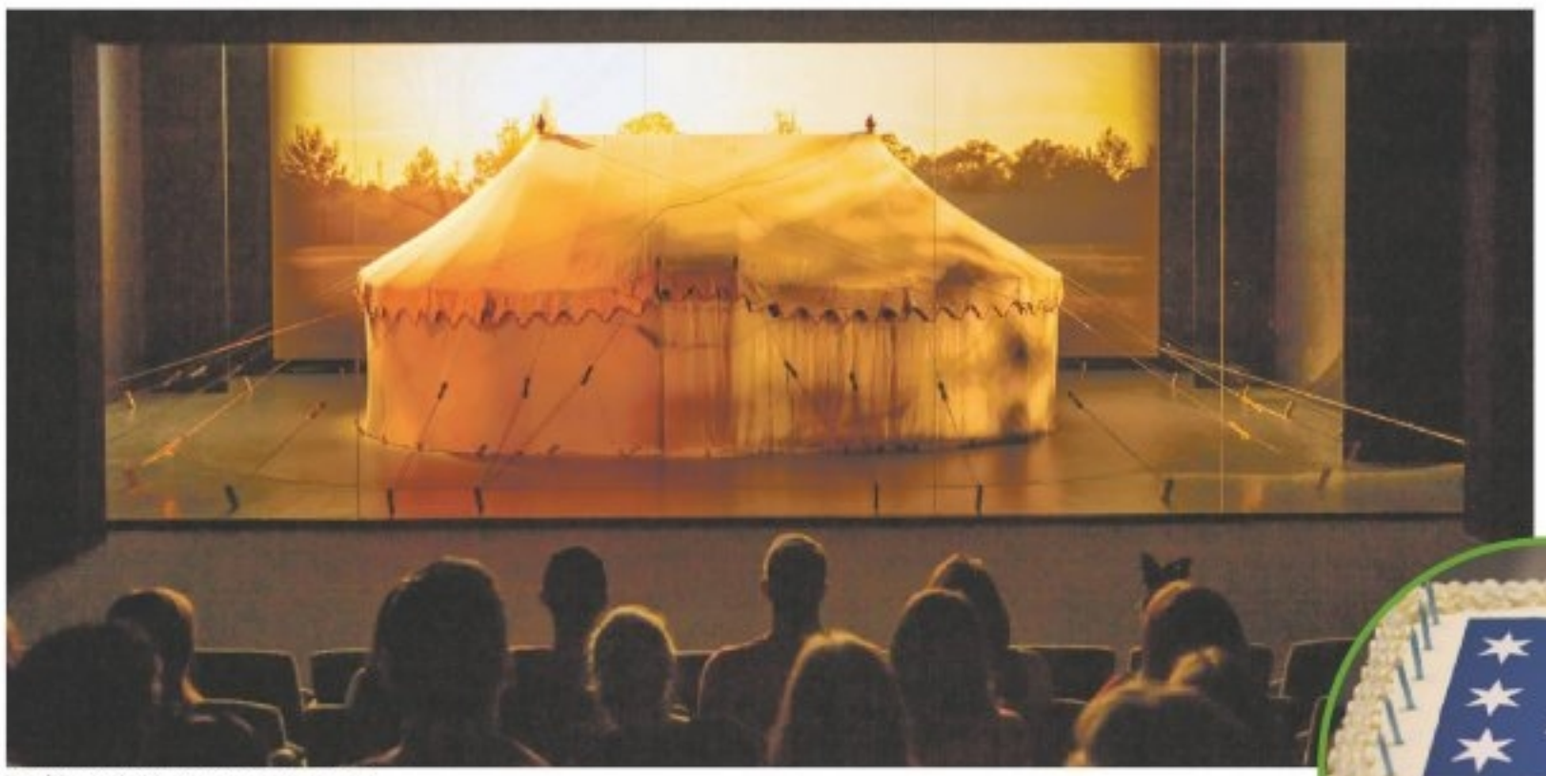
A birthday cake for history's sake

The MOAR is celebrating Washington's birthday with fun events all weekend long.

MOLLY GIVEN
Molly.Given@metro.us



Washington's War Tent JOE PAINTER/ MOAR

President's Day is this weekend and in honor of our nation's first president, the Museum of the American Revolution is celebrating George Washington's birthday with a weekend full of fun and historical events. From Saturday, Feb. 16 to Monday, Feb. 18 all Philadelphians are invited to come out and celebrate the American Fabius' 287th birthday.

Throughout the weekend guests can wish the Father of our Country a very happy birthday by signing a giant birthday card in the Museum's rotunda, and by singing "Happy Birthday" to Washington on Feb. 17 (1 pm). Of course, what birthday would be complete without a delicious cake? Guests can indulge in a delicious slice of birthday cake shaped like Washington's Standard (the flag that marked his presence on the battlefield) after singing "Happy Birthday" as well.

If you can't make the cake, guests have another opportunity to enjoy a delicious meal at the MOAR's Breakfast with George Washington event happening on Feb. 17 (seatings available for 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.) The breakfast buffet takes place in the Museum's elegant Liberty Hall and will feature delicious bites including an assortment of muffins, bagels, mini quiches and more from Brûlée Catering, plus a General Washington historical interpreter will interact with guests as they dine on their tasty treats. Tickets for the breakfast buffet are $50 for adults, $25 for children and $40 for members.

No birthday is complete without a cake. NIAMH O' CONNELL

Visitors can also take a step back in time and try on 1790s clothing in the Museum's special hands-on "Hamilton Was Here: Rising Up in Revolutionary Philadelphia" exhibit, plus visit a recreated scene from Washington's first presidential home (which was actually located just a few blocks from where the museum stands today.) The exhibit is free with museum admission and will be at the MOAR until March 17.

Visitors can also stop by the museum's core exhibit to see Washington's War Tent, this monumental piece of history served as

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Step back in time this weekend at the MOAR. NIAMH O' CONNELL

Washington's wartime headquarters and was brought to the museum last year and opened to the public in April 2018. Philadelphians can also view a sword that belonged to Washington (on loan from a private lender) that was made in Philadelphia in 1770 and used during the early years of the Revolutionary War.

Throughout the weekend a Discovery Cart will be at the MOAR from 11 a.m-3 p.m., and guests can stop by to learn the story of Harry Washington, a man who escaped from Mount Vernon and found freedom by fighting as a loyalist in the Revolutionary War. But that's not all. Since the Philadelphia Tattoo Convention also takes place this weekend, the Discovery Cart will also be offering a (temporary) Revolutionary tattoo of Washington's star to coincide with the convention.

There will also be a "History in the Making" station in the Museum's rotunda where visitors can make their own button to take home, inspired by Washington's inaugural buttons that are on display in the Museum. The "History in the Making" station will be at the museum on Saturday Feb. 16 and Sunday Feb. 17 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Museum of the American Revolution is at 101 S. 3rd St. For more information visit amrevmuseum.org

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MATT BURKE

Matt Burke is a veteran sports journalist and the Founder and Editorial Director of MetroBet.

PROVIDED

Philadelphians are as loyal as it gets when it comes to their local teams, but loyalty can be put to the test at times when you're betting on sports. As the old saying goes, "Bet with your head, not your heart."

That local pride and loyalty was rewarded, however, last month at SugarHouse Casino in Philadelphia as Eagles fans bet on the Birds in droves. In upsetting the Bears in the Wild Card round, the Eagles covered a -6.5-point spread. In the next round against the Saints, the Eagles didn't win the game outright but did cover an 8-point spread. In January, at least, it was smart to put your money where your heart was.

TWEET OF THE DAY

Aaron Kessler
@aaronkessler

The Champions League coverage from Turner Sports is an absolute joke, only showing one game? C'mon man.

SugarHouse has gone all-in on trying to capture the local flavor as sports betting gets off the ground in the city. While watching the games in front of giant LED screens in plush chairs, you can have a Geno's cheesesteak brought right to you and you can also get great betting odds on the local teams.

"Our goal was to try and integrate the Philadelphia sports culture into the sportsbook as much as possible when we opened," SugarHouse Vice President and General Counsel Evan Davis told MetroBet this week. "One of the things we tried to do with the Super Bowl was to come up with some Philadelphia-specific prop bets. One was called the 'Philly Special 2.' It was, 'Will a quarterback catch a touchdown?' We had that at 20-1. Obviously that didn't pan out. But overall it's been phenomenal, the response we have seen.

"We opened [the sportsbook] toward the tail end of the NFL regular season in December and we saw a tremendous amount of interest in that, especially when we saw the Eagles enjoy their late-season success."

SugarHouse is fan-friendly to both experienced and novice sports bettors as their sportsbook features 18 betting kiosks. In other words, if you're a first-time bettor and might be a little intimidated to speak with a teller at first, you can take your time placing that first bet at the machine.

"The kiosks are so easy to use and we also have the best team of people around," Davis told MetroBet.

The betting attention at SugarHouse is now shifting away from football to not just the daily local lines but also the futures odds of the Phillies and Sixers.

"Right now, the Phillies are 12-1 to win the World Series," Davis said. "The Sixers are 14-1 to win the NBA title but +275 to win the Eastern Conference. So there's a significant disparity there with the Warriors as overwhelming favorites to win the NBA title at -225."

SugarHouse prepared for the online boom

MATT BURKE

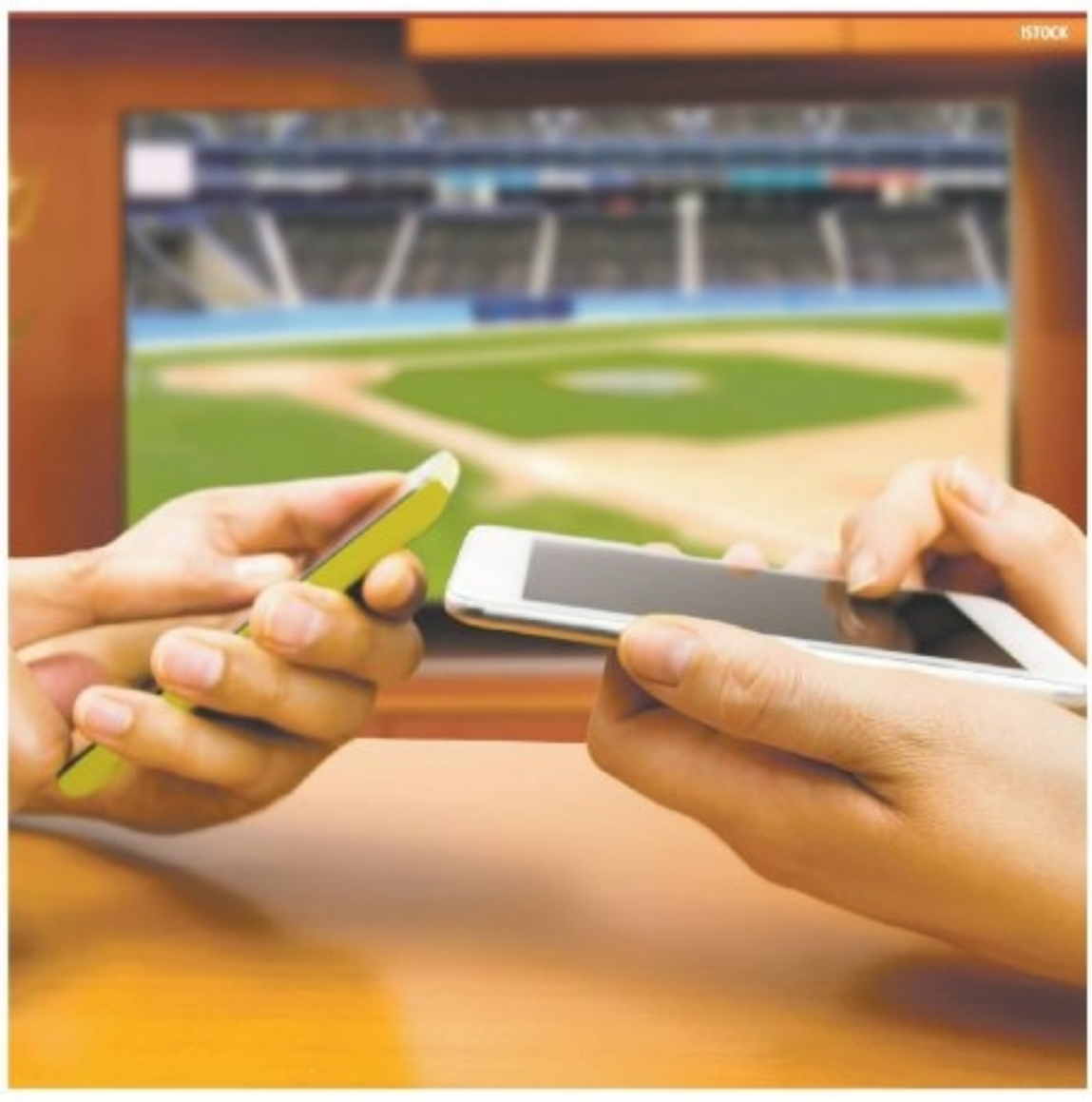
Matt Burke is a veteran sports journalist and the Founder and Editorial Director of MetroBet.

As we've outlined several times here in MetroBet, Pennsylvania has been a bit slow to incorporate legal online sports betting compared to New Jersey. Several industry insiders told MetroBet last month that they didn't expect the online component to come into play until September and the start of the 2019 NFL season. But in recent weeks, a rosier picture has been painted.

"I know that the gaming board has been working tirelessly to get through all of the new lines of gaming that are coming out: sports wagering, mobile sports wagering and mobile casino betting as well," SugarHouse Vice President and legal counsel Evan Davis told MetroBet. "I believe that last they said of it was toward the end of the first or end of the second quarter [of 2019]. We're obviously working with them and we think that we're going to have an unbelievable product given the success of [SugarHouse] in New Jersey that's been active for a while now.

"The SugarHouse app in New Jersey is operated by Rush Street Interactive, which is an affiliate of ours. So when online launches in Pennsylvania we'll have to see if there are any changes that are needed from a regulatory standpoint or otherwise. But I would suspect that it will be very similar to the New Jersey app."

In New Jersey, almost two-thirds of all money wagered on sports in the state is done so online.



ISTOCK

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Lots of action on Phillies ahead of season

Phils slotted for 86 wins as of now.

MATT YOUMANS

Matt Youmans is VSiN's Senior Editor. He spent 16 years at the Las Vegas Review-Journal as a sports betting columnist before joining VSiN.

GETTY IMAGES

LAS VEGAS — If the Phillies hook a big one on their free agency fishing trip, whether it's Bryce Harper or Manny Machado, Philadelphia could become the second-hottest ticket on the MLB futures market.

In terms of popularity with the betting public, no team will surpass the Yankees. Even without Harper or Machado, the Yankees are tagged with baseball's highest win total and continue to attract World Series action at a runaway rate.

As a long, strange offseason merges with the start of training camps this week, Harper and Machado remain unsigned. It's baseball's version of "The Bachelor," minus roses and paradise. When that finally changes, it seems neither star will end up in pinstripes and at least one will land in Philadelphia.

"It's wild. Everybody is waiting on those two guys," William Hill sportsbook director Nick Bogdanovich said.

Yet some oddsmakers are done with the waiting game. CG Technology and Caesars sportsbooks have posted regular-season win totals.

The Westgate SuperBook will post season wins on Sunday, with William Hill set to follow in two to three weeks.

At the Westgate, the Yankees, Red Sox and Astros share the World Series favorite's role at 6-1 odds, but the Yankees have drawn more than double the money of Boston and Houston combined. The Phillies are lurking in a pack of contenders at 14-1.

"The Yankees are the sexy team," Westgate book manager Ed Salmons said. "But I know there are a lot of people looking to bet the Phillies. Most people don't realize the Phillies have a ton of money, they are back on the upswing and this is the year they are targeting. It sounds like Harper is going to the Phillies and he's trying everything not to go.

"I think Machado wants to go to the Yankees or Phillies and he doesn't want to go to the White Sox. That's just my impression, and it's guesswork at this point."

CG Technology posted the Yankees atop the win totals board at 97, followed by the Red Sox and Astros (each at 96.5), Dodgers (94.5) and Cubs (90.5). The Phillies, the 11th team listed at 86 wins, could move up a few spots if they hook Harper or Machado. What is a superstar worth to a team's win total?

"It might be two or three wins," Bogdanovich said. "It's a tough question. In baseball, how much of an impact would one player make over 162 games? I don't even know how to quantify it. A lot depends on where the player goes and what that team specifically needed. Machado being a shortstop is critical, but Harper being an outfielder, not so much."

Philadelphia's recent trade with Miami for catcher J.T. Realmuto is already enough to put the Phillies over the top in the National League, said VSiN analyst Josh Towers. A team on the rise in 2018 added shortstop Jean Segura, outfielder Andrew McCutchen and reliever David Robertson before dealing for arguably the best catcher in the majors.

"To me, Realmuto is the difference-maker," said Towers, a pitcher who spent parts of eight seasons in the majors (2001 to 2009) with the Orioles, Blue Jays and Yankees.

"I do think the Phillies are the team to beat in the NL. What if they get Bryce? Their outfield gets better. The NL East is sick. The Mets, Braves and Nationals are improved."

MLB win totals for 2019 regular season

New York Yankees 97 over -120
Boston Red Sox 96.5 o/u -115
Houston Astros 96.5 o/u -115
Los Angeles Dodgers 94.5 under -125
Chicago Cubs 90.5 over -120
Cleveland Indians 90.5 under -120
St. Louis Cardinals 88.5 o/u -115
Washington Nationals 88.5 o/u -115
Atlanta Braves 87 o/u -115
Milwaukee Brewers 86.5 over -125
Philadelphia Phillies 86 over -125

Sports on TV Highlights

7:30 pm	**NBA Basketball** Philadelphia 76ers vs. New York Knicks	NBC Sports Philadelphia
6:30 pm	**Men's CBB** Providence Friars vs. Villanova Wildcats	FOX Sports 1
7:00 pm	**Men's CBB** SMU Mustangs vs. Temple Owls	ESPN 3
7:30 pm	**Men's CBB** Duquesne Dukes vs. La Salle Explorers	ESPN+
8:00 pm	**NBA Basketball** Houston Rockets vs. Minnesota Timberwolves	ESPN
8:00 pm	**NHL Hockey** Edmonton Oilers vs. Pittsburgh Penguins	NBCSN

Sixers–Knicks betting preview

The Sixers should be able to dispatch the dreadful New York Knicks on Wednesday night, even coming off a game against the rival Celtics the night prior. The Sixers beat the Knicks (albeit by just four points) at Madison Square Garden as recently as Jan. 13, which was New York's fourth loss during their current 17-game losing streak. But the point spread may be too big for Philadelphia to cover, as it is 2-6 against the spread in its last eight latter halves of a back-to-back (per Covers.com). Therefore, we'll look toward the totals market for a play here.

The under is 8-3 in the last 11 meetings between the Sixers and the Knicks. Philly has gone below the total in five of their last six games overall, and has an identical record in their last six road games. The under has cashed in eight of the Sixers' last 11 games against teams below the .500 mark

New York has been an under machine of late, as the total has stayed low in each of its last seven games at MSG. The Knicks' over/under record in their last 11 games is 2-9.

GETTY IMAGES

Under bettors will only be helped if Philly decides to rest key players like center Joel Embiid.

THE PLAY: Sixers moneyline and Sixers vs. Knicks under parlay

ROBERT CRISCOLA

VSiN DAILY LINE

NBA

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS -9 AT NEW YORK KNICKS

HOUSTON ROCKETS -2 AT MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES

NCAAB

PROVIDENCE FRIARS AT VILLANOVA WILDCATS -10.5

SMU MUSTANGS AT TEMPLE OWLS -5.5

DUQUESNE DUKES VS. LA SALLE EXPLORERS - 2

NHL

EDMONTON OILERS +230 AT PITTSBURGH PENGUINS -210

TOO EARLY TO CALL MARKELLE FULTZ A BUST

OPINION

JOVAN ALFORD

Bust. It is a term often used to describe an immensely talented team-sport athlete who is drafted with a high pick but falls short of the expectations laid upon him.

If you look up the word in the dictionary, you might see pictures of Kwame Brown, Greg Oden, Michael Olowokandi, and Anthony Bennett.

Along those same lines, this term has now become synonymous with former NBA No. 1 pick Markelle Fultz.

The Philadelphia 76ers traded Fultz last week to the Orlando Magic for Jonathon Simmons, a first-round pick and a second-round pick. It was not an overwhelmingly great return for the Sixers, but it was clear that they were ready to turn the page on the short-lived Fultz era.

How did we get to this point? How can the Sixers trade their second top draft selection in as many seasons for mere role players and draft assets?

Is it because they are in win-now mode and believe they have a shot to make it to the NBA Finals this season? Or was he on the wrong team, stuck in an organization that did not allow his talents to shine?

All of these questions are warranted and will be answered in due course.

Nevertheless, when considering the curious case of Markelle Fultz, one wonders what could have been.

Everybody remembers how he played at the University of Washington a couple of years ago as a freshman for an underwhelming squad.

He was an immensely talented combo guard with a smooth spin move that left observers in awe every time he drove into the lane. He was compared to reigning NBA MVP James Harden because of his playmaking and shotmaking abilities.

It was clear he was the number one pick at that time, despite a draft class which had Jayson Tatum, Lonzo Ball, De'Aaron Fox, Kyle Kuzma, and Donovan Mitchell.

Then the 2017 NBA Draft came. The Sixers traded up from No. 3 to No. 1, which was notable enough, but what's more is that they traded with their arch-rivals, the Boston Celtics, to take Fultz.

Sure, the Celtics got Tatum and had a right to feel good about their selection, but in Philadelphia, who cared? At that moment, it seemed this was a match made in heaven for "The Process." The Sixers finally had their backcourt of the future with Ben Simmons and Fultz.

Then things continued to look promising in the NBA Summer League. Fultz put on a show in Salt Lake City. He showed off his electric spin move and pulled up for 3-pointers with ease.

However, for all of the promise we saw with Fultz, it came to a screeching fault when the 2017-18 season began.

There was something wrong with his jump shot. A hitch became evident every time he took a shot. The mechanics looked uncomfortable. More importantly, Fultz looked uncomfortable.

The 6-foot-4 combo guard missed a majority of his rookie campaign with scapular muscle imbalance, which affects the shoulder. Fultz eventually made his way back onto the hardwood, playing late in that season and ending his rookie year with a triple-double. Yet, that was short-lived, too: The young point guard still could not find his groove.

This season, Fultz has played in only 19 games. He went to see a shoulder specialist in November. The next month, he was diagnosed with TOS, or thoracic outlet syndrome, which has plagued other basketball players such as Landry Fields and Ben Uzoh.

Could the TOS diagnosis explain Fultz's awkward shooting motion and NBA struggles? Without a shadow of a doubt. It is not often that a basketball player with his skill set goes from being a starting NBA point guard to a possible bust.

Not many people understand the pressures of being a No. 1 draft pick and everything that comes with it.

With that being said, it is still too early to call Fultz a bust. While he might not have fit with the Sixers, maybe he will have his "come to Jesus" moment in Orlando.

If he can figure things out with the help of Magic head coach Steve Clifford and make it through one of the toughest roadblocks of his career, I have no doubt that he will become one of the better players in the Association.

This story is far from over.

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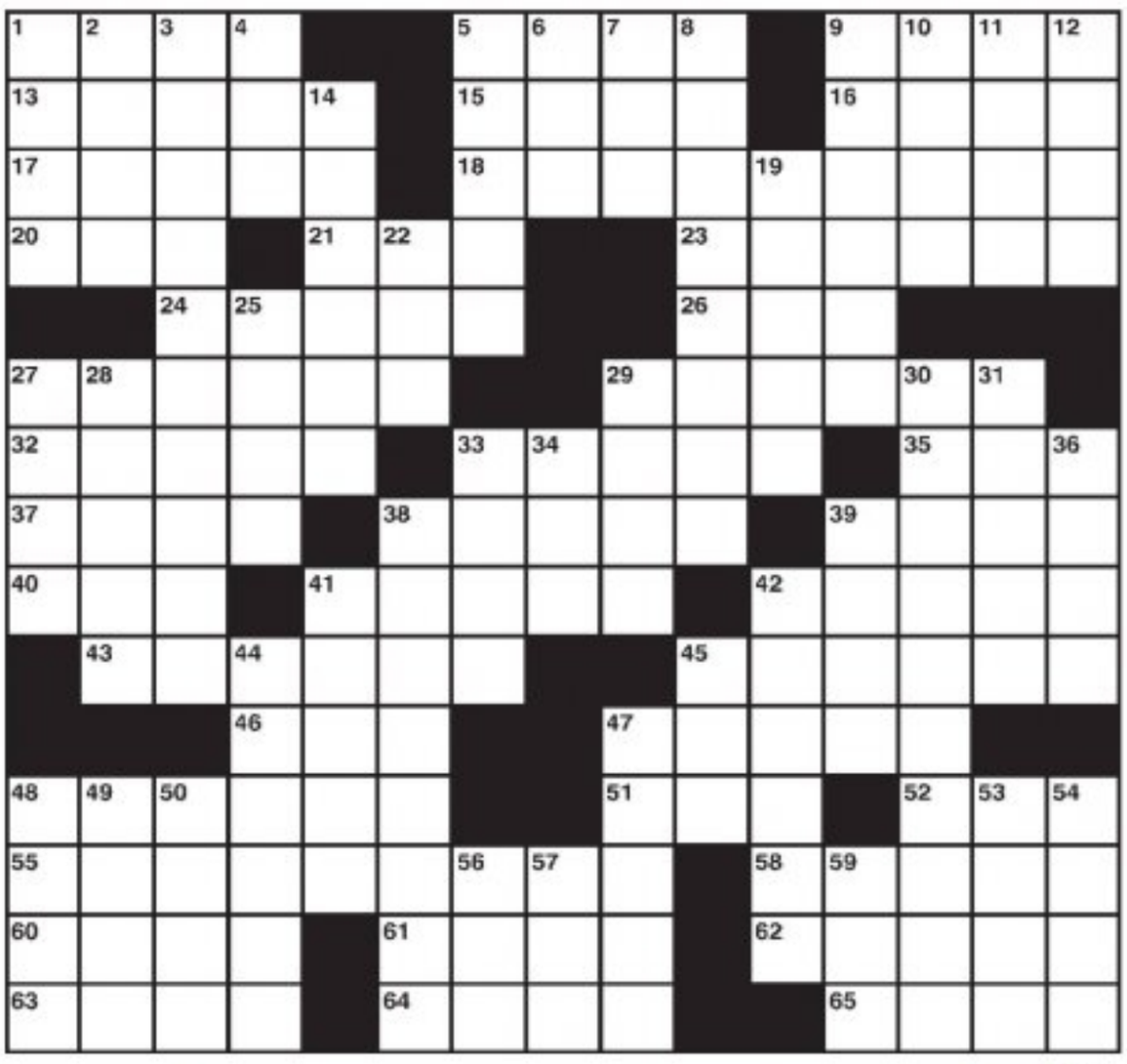
ACROSS

1 On the __ with; not speaking to
5 Slightly open
9 Black bird
13 Plant pest
15 White fish
16 Vesuvius' output
17 Steed
18 Walked unsteadily
20 Family card game
21 Behold
23 Revolutionary rider Paul
24 Damp
26 Very late bedtime
27 Zsa Zsa & Eva
29 __ Rico
32 Wed secretly
33 Saves
35 Wheel center
37 Feel the loss of
38 Does an usher's job
39 Crumbly cheese
40 __ pants; Jean-Claude Killy's attire
41 Arial & Times New Roman
42 Female animals
43 Personal writings
45 Baffling questions
46 "...a miner, forty-niner, and __ daughter, Clementine..."
47 Fraternity letter
48 Hut near a swimming pool
51 "__ Lazy River"
52 Truman's predecessor, for short
55 Topples
58 Numerical comparison
60 Follow orders
61 Outer garment
62 Mattress pad covering
63 Likelihood
64 Nervous
65 __ and crafts

DOWN

1 Where 2/3 of Hawaiians live
2 "Once __ a time..."
3 Clot in a blood vessel
4 Malia, to Sasha
5 Thing worth having
6 __ down; make a note of
7 Chicken __ king
8 Reassembles the ranks
9 Ingenious
10 Seldom seen
11 Finished; done
12 Get one's feet wet
14 Hope to get
19 Autry & Kelly
22 Curvy letter
25 Klutz's word
27 Diamonds & rubies
28 Similar
29 Animals in the house
30 From then on
31 External
33 Griffey Sr. & Griffey Jr.
34 Break a fast
36 Lowest singing voice
38 Teriyaki marinade
39 Quick
41 Pass out
42 Back teeth
44 Shattered glass fragments
45 Get-up-and-go
47 Singer Springfield
48 Singer Perry
49 Enthusiastic
50 Be flexible
53 Count calories
54 Decays
56 Slender stick
57 Henpeck
59 __ moment; instant of realization



BY TCA

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Y	W	S	N	A	E	L	R	O	U
T	K	A	D	F	R	E	N	C	H
R	T	R	E	P	W	Q	E	A	T
A	A	G	N	N	R	L	C	R	U
P	F	I	H	H	E	O	K	N	E
A	E	D	A	B	S	W	L	I	S
R	A	R	R	T	D	Y	A	V	D
A	S	A	U	D	A	V	C	A	A
D	T	M	R	X	E	N	E	L	Y
E	E	F	G	Y	B	X	C	R	Q

Beads
Carnival
Celebrate
Costume
Eat
Fat
Feast
French
Mardi Gras
Necklace
New
Orleans
Parade
Party
Tuesday

metro.us/wander

Category: Director

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U	I	L	T
L	L	E	D
E	R	M	O

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metro.us/sudoku

		4	7	6			8	2
		7	8				4	5
		2	9					
	9		5			4		1
		3				6		
2		1			6		3	
					8	3		
3	2				7	8		
1	4			5	9	2		

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T	O	M			S	W	O	R	D		N	O	S	E
A	M	I	D		H	A	N	O	I		U	G	L	Y
C	A	N	E		I	N	C	A	S		T	R	E	E
	R	E	P	O	R	T	E	R	S		M	E	W	S
			R	U	T	S			O	L	E			
A	S	S	E	T	S		T	E	L	E	G	R	A	M
S	W	I	S	S		S	H	A	V	E		O	N	E
H	I	E	S		P	O	I	S	E		T	U	G	S
E	F	G		F	R	O	N	T		T	U	N	E	S
S	T	E	A	L	I	N	G		H	A	R	D	L	Y
			R	U	M			S	I	C	K			
F	L	A	N		E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L	
L	O	G	E		V	A	L	I	D		S	P	O	T
A	W	E	S		A	G	A	Z	E		H	E	R	E
T	E	D	S		L	A	T	E	R			D	D	E

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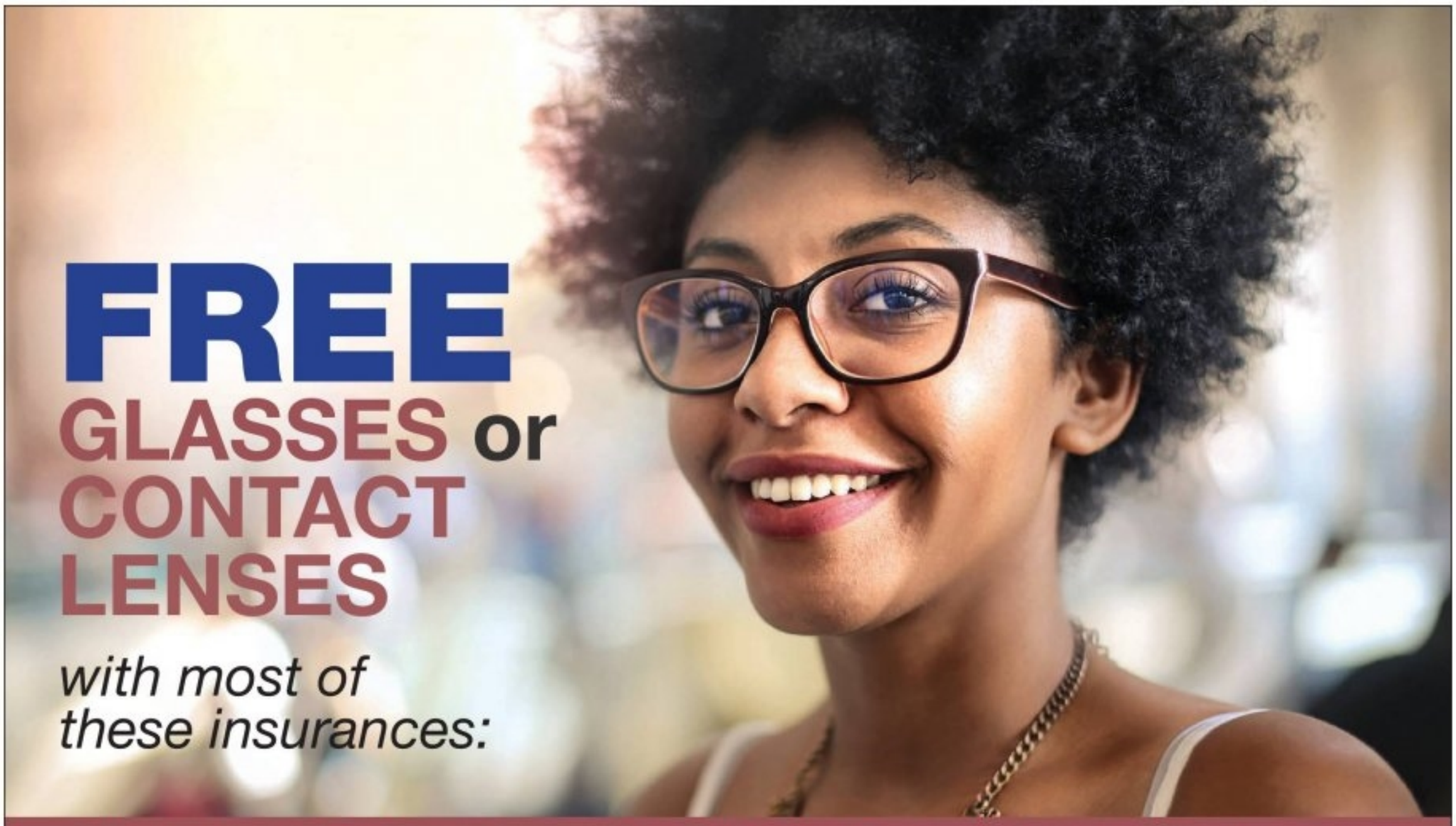

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